

An interview with D. Omer Seamon

D. OMER SEAMON

An Interview Conducted by

Joe Kish

February 5, 1981

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NARRATOR DATA SHEET

02/05/81

DATE

Name of narrator: D. Omer Seamon
 Address: R.R. 3, Box 228, Rosedale Phone: 812 - 466-2072
 Birthdate: March 2, 1911 Birthplace: Gibson County, Indiana
 Length of residence in Terre Haute: 50 years
 Education: Grade school and high school--Princeton, Indiana.
Study--Paramount Studios, Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Occupational history: Art Director, Thomson-Symon, 1938-1954.

Special interests, activities, etc. Art.
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D. OMER SEAMON

Tape 1

February 5, 1981

Studio of Mr. Seamon

INTERVIEWER: Joseph Kish

TRANSCRIBER: Kathleen M. Skelly

For: Vigo County Oral History Program

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JK: This is Joe Kish with the oral history committee of Vigo County. This is Thursday, February 5, 1981. I am at the home studio of D. Omer "Salty" Seamon, a distinguished artist, and we're going to be talking with Salty a little bit about his work in Terre Haute.

Good morning, Salty.

SEAMON: Good morning. How are you, Joe?

JK: Salty, are you a native of these parts?

SEAMON: Not exactly in this area. I was born in southern Indiana in Gibson County on March 2, 1911. I came to Terre Haute about 1931. Thought I'd be here a couple of weeks and I've been here about 50 years. I liked the community; people have been good; and I've been happy here all these years.

JS: Now, did you have your education here or . . .

SEAMON: I went to grade school and high school at Princeton, Indiana, and then studied at Paramount Studios in Minneapolis, Minnesota, when I was right out of high school. And that's about the only formal education I've had, but I'm still studying and trying to learn more about the business.

JK: The art business you're talking about?

SEAMON: Yes.

JK: Now, what positions have you held, Salty?

SEAMON: Well, when I first came to Terre Haute, I started working for Thomson-Symon & Company, and they manufactured the paper that was posted on billboards throughout the U.S.A. and some foreign countries.

JK: About when was that?

SEAMON: About 1931. This is during the Depression. Things were pretty rough then but I was working and they had an art department with three other artists

SEAMON: in the department. We made sketches for billboards in proportion to 1 inch to a foot. The actual structures are about 8-1/2 feet high and about 19 feet long. We made an inch to the foot sketch.

JK: Now, was this for local consumption or wider consumption?

SEAMON: This was [for] all over the United States, and they shipped a lot to foreign countries. At one time, I was in Mexico City, oh, about 1938 and saw a poster that I did for Packard Motor car that was export posters. And I got a kick out of that. And they, of course, advertisted anything that . . . any product that was for sale; and one day you might be drawing a box of chocolates and the next day a sack of chicken feed. So, you really learned to draw in the commercial end of it, and I think that's where I refined my technique or really learned to draw because you're called upon to do a lot of things that you could care less about. But in the meantime you were learning how to draw all these different things.

JK: Um hm.

SEAMON: And I think the basis of any painting is the knowledge of drawing that's underneath the surface..

JK: I see.

Now you touched on Thomson-Symon, how large was the company?

SEAMON: Well, at that time they employed, roughly, I'd say around 100 people. And they got started . . .

JK: Where were they located?

SEAMON: North 13th Street about 1800 block between . . . well, up around Beech and Plum Street, I believe, next . . . well, they were next to the Packard Shirt Company, which was a landmark for a long time around that area.

They came down from Chicago about 1926, I believe, and Carmen Thomson, the founder of it, had an idea of printing 24 sheets. They called [it] that because in the early days the presses weren't big enough to print a full size sheet that's used now.

SEAMON: So it took 24 small sheets to make the present size of the poster now. Well he, Carmen Thomson, got the idea of doing this with silk screen (or serigraph, it's referred to sometimes), and this is how Thomson-Symon came about. And they thrived on small orders, short-run posters, political posters and this sort of thing -- where lithography was expensive and people could afford ten or twelve posters [by the serigraph process]. And they made money all through the Depression. And later I was art director there. [I] worked there until the war [WW II] came along, spent about 3-1/2 years in it, came back, and was there until 1954. Then I decided to start free-lancing and in the meantime had built a house where we are now, about 12 miles north of Terre Haute. And then later on, [we] ran out of room in the house and built the studio. So, this is where we're at now.

JK: What date do you put on the studio?

SEAMON: I started about 1960 and took about four years before I got into it to work and then whittled on it 'til I finally got it done. And I more-or-less built it to suit my needs. I've got a basement with a [complete] wood [working] shop where I make all my frames. And it's livable. It's got kitchen facilities, beds, and bathroom. So, maybe you might say it's the biggest doghouse in Vigo County.

JK: (laughs heartily)

Back to Thomson-Symon, is the company still in business?

SEAMON: No, they went along 'til . . . and thrived and made money, I believe, 'til about, well, 1975 or '6 -- along in there, I believe. Maybe a few years before that, not any later than that.

JK: And the staff. Did the staff just continually decrease?

SEAMON: Yes, and then the Artco firm went in and was doing a little bookbinding and still doing printing. And I believe then they went out of business, and at present I don't believe there's anybody there. But it was in business for many years and it was a going concern.

JK: Now, we are in your studio and you talked about

JK: constructing it. It is a beautiful place. I've been out here a number of times and enjoyed your setting, and [it's] just beautiful all times of the year.

Now, I notice chairs over to the side. Do you have classes out here?

SEAMON: I had some classes going for a while, but I got so busy that I discontinued them. I enjoyed them. I like to help people if I can. Occasionally, I give a demonstration of water color. A group will come in and we use the chairs in that order.

JK: Now, your work now, could you give us an idea of what you are concentrating on? What are you doing most of? Are you doing commercial work or are you doing portraits that people would . . . original art pieces that people would like to purchase from you? Could you tell us a little about that?

SEAMON: Well, of course, primarily I was in commercial art for many years. I still do a few architectural renderings, and I still look on it as a service really. And I enjoy the challenge of commercial work. Each job's different. But now since I'm a little older, I spend most of my time on paintings and one-man shows and commissions. I've got enough commissions to keep me busy for a year. And portraits, I don't do too many although I am doing one for the college -- ISU -- of Mr. Cordell, I believe, that left the dictionaries to the library?

JK: Cordell.

SEAMON: Cordell?

JK: Warren Cordell.

SEAMON: And it's to be finished by April and I've got to get started on that before long. I don't specialize in portraits because it's kind of a ticklish business. You can think you've done an excellent job on a person, but none of us know what we look like ourselves, but we all have an idea of what we think we ought to look like.

JK: What medium do you favor?

SEAMON: Watercolor.

JK: Watercolor. I notice around here. . . do you ever get into oils at all?

SEAMON: Well, I kept thinking I'd get into them and try them, but I've never gotten around to it and I'm running out of time now, so I think probably I'll never touch them because it would be a lifetime work to master oil. I'm still trying to learn more about watercolor. And it's a fascinating medium I think.

JK: How many hours a day, I mean, do you devote to your painting?

SEAMON: Well, I'm out here about 7 o'clock in the morning. [I] usually work on frames for about an hour. Then I come up out of the basement and start on whatever's on the drawing board. And I'll work the rest of the day and [am] usually back after dinner for a couple of hours. I'd say from 7 'til 8 in the evening.

JK: That's a good long day! (laughs)

SEAMON: Not every day, but Tuesdays . . . I work around Tuesday in town and deliveries and so forth. Well, it's not work; I enjoy it. Everybody's looking for a 40-hour week; I'm looking for a 40-hour day.

JK: (laughs heartily)

SEAMON: (joins in laughter)

JK: Well, that's good.

Do you have any idea as an estimate how many paintings you have completed? In round numbers?

SEAMON: Well, if you're talking about paintings of landscapes, I've photographed watercolors after I've finished them for about 30 years, and I've roughly counted the slides one time. It's not an accurate count but I'd say around 1500.

JK: My goodness, that is a great deal.

SEAMON: I kept track two years of how many frames I made. It was about 1400 and something frames. Of course, some of them were postcard size but they have four corners to put together the same as a larger one. And on the paintings, I kept track of those for one year, and I think it was around 230 something.

SEAMON: Of course, there were small, big ones, and so forth. But that gives you an average. Yeah, I turn out quite a few.

JK: Well, I want to make a note at this point, too, that you keep referring to the frames. You make all your own frames for all of your work.

SEAMON: Yes. Yes. I think you can control the kind of frame that should go on the painting. And I think the framing and matting is as important in relationship to the painting as putting the painting together to start with. You can make or break a picture by the way it's framed.

JK: Now, are all of your paintings for sale?

SEAMON: Yes. Well, they start out all to be for sale, but once in a while, my wife and I will pick out one that we like and take it over in the house. We've built up a collection of our own that aren't for sale. It will soon be around 300 paintings.

JK: I've gone through the . . . I've seen these, and these are marvelous, Salty.

I keep referring to you as "Salty." How did you get the name "Salty"?

SEAMON: Well, when I first come to Terre Haute, and I'd worked there at Thomson-Symon a day or two, and one of the fellows says, "What's your name again?" And I said, "Seamon, like the ocean," or made some remark, and he said, "Salty Seamon," and laughed. And I laughed and it's been that ever since.

JK: My goodness.

SEAMON: I've been called worse.

JK: (laughs heartily) Haven't we all?

Now, when did you really become interested in the old buildings of Terre Haute?

SEAMON: Well, of course, doing architectural renderings I've always been interested in buildings. Of course, they are new buildings. Some of the old buildings have been renovated, but, oh, I started doing some renderings before the war. And I enjoy it. It's

SEAMON: kind of a challenge to take some blueprints in the flat form and elevation and plot plans and so forth and put it up into dimension or in perspective that people can see what it really is going to look like. It's more of a challenge than just painting a landscape. And I enjoy them.

JK: I'm referring to some of the Sherer series.

SEAMON: Oh! Well, on those, when Mr. Sherer first talked about a series . . .

JK: That's Forrest Sherer with Forrest Sherer insurance agency we're speaking about.

SEAMON: Yes. He first wanted an Indiana scene that would be fitting for Christmas card of landmarks around this area -- Indiana. So we started out with the covered bridge at Turkey Run State Park, which probably has been photographed more than any bridge in the state. And that was the first one. And then the second one was the Spring Mill mill at Spring Mill Park. Well, the next year then he kind of got off on to old buildings, and it went that direction ever since. And they've been pretty interesting. Most of them are gone now. A lot of them are gone, so it's kind of a historical record of some of the old buildings around this area.

JK: That's the one question I was going to inject at this time. What do you think the importance of these paintings would be?

SEAMON: Well, I don't know really the importance. Of course, they've brought a lot of happiness, I think, and a lot of nostalgia to people that remember some of the old buildings. The two most popular ones were the Union Depot and the Big Four Depot, which people related to. They went through there at some time or other, so it meant something to them. And I think the other buildings as well. Some have been more interesting than others. The old YMCA building on Cherry Street had a certain appeal to a lot of the older men now that remember it. And I run into people that are . . . say, "Well, you sure brought back a lot of memories about that particular building." So this is a nice compliment, and, of course, it's a nice compliment to /the late/ Forrest Sherer that he was interested in it enough to have them done in the first place.

JK: Well, I think . . . I might interject here that I think that it gives us a beautiful pictorial history of this community and the landmarks, some of which are not here any more. Sometimes we don't have photographs of these buildings that brings out the color. We didn't have color photography back then, and so I think this does give us a good historical history of the kind of structures we had.

SEAMON: I might add that on old Fort Harrison, the fort, of course, there was nothing to go by there except there was a painting in the Deming Hotel, a big oil painting. That was another artist's idea of what it looked like. And then there's an old pencil sketch of it in the Historical Society that shows it, and how accurate it is we don't know. So, working with those two things and your own imagination and kind of putting things together how it might have been, you arrive at what you hope is [a] pretty accurate painting of how it might have been. There's one advantage, of course, to it. There's nobody old enough around to tell you that it's wrong. (laughs)

JK: (laughs heartily) I'm sure, knowing your work, that it's as exact as you could make it.

SEAMON: But I get interested in research in some of these things, and I get interested in reading about them, and sometimes I spend more time on that than I do putting the picture together. But it's pretty interesting to go back. I'm more interested in what man did before I got here than going to the moon. I understand the other better.

JK: (laughs)

SEAMON: I think it was quite an achievement.

JK: What art works have been most successful as far as your work has been concerned? I mean . . .

SEAMON: You mean on the market?

JK: Yes.

SEAMON: Well, of course, I was born on a farm. And I can hardly go by an old barn that I don't look at it and wonder whoever lived there, if they were happy or worked their heart out. Each one could tell an interesting story, maybe happy, sad, and so forth, but they're disappearing. And I understand rural Indiana,

SEAMON: the Midwest here, and old barns. And of course, the covered bridges in Parke County have been very interesting. I tell everyone that in Indiana you paint barns, bridges, creeks, and trees. That's about it. But I'd say old barns probably have been as good a subject for me as any. I don't want to be known just as a barn painter, but I look at 'em a good deal. Like somebody asked Hillary that climbed Mount Everest, says, "Why did you do it?" And he said, "Well, 'cause it was there." Well, I guess I paint them 'cause they're there. (laughs)

JK: (laughs) Now you've done a lot of . . . let me call it, community work. You're interested in the community, very interested. And you have donated a number of your works to community organizations. Could you expand a little bit on that.

SEAMON: Well, quite a few. It's getting almost to the place now where I'm going to have to more-or-less stop it, because there's been so many demands on donations that After all, I make a living at this business and I feel I've somewhat repaid the community for having been good to me to start with, and I'll still probably donate one now and then. And it's a nice compliment that people do want a picture of mine. But on the other hand, economics enters into it, too.

JK: I understand that. I was talking about some charity organizations and things of that sort.

SEAMON: Well . . .

JK: You have done a number of these. That's what we're trying to bring out.

SEAMON: The Boys' Club is one. I don't know if I can remember . . .

JK: Indiana State University, you did a schoolhouse for them.

SEAMON: Yes. And the old one-room schoolhouse, typical of the early days in the midwest. I can't think of a lot of them right now. Well, I did a series of animals for the symphony, [the] Terre Haute Symphony, and Well, there's probably a list around here someplace, but I can't think of all of them now.

JK: Well, we know it's probably a lengthy list when

JK: you get to it, Salty.

SEAMON: A lot of sororities have raffled off pictures, and, of course, there they buy a picture and hope that they'll make enough off it to make it worthwhile for their trouble. But there's been several. I mean, the Goodwill and different organizations.

JK: Who have been your most important sponsors or patrons?

SEAMON: Well, I've got a friend used to be over at Marshall, Illinois. His name is Jim O'Neil. He's kind of an expertise on formulating medicine -- kind of a small Eli Lilly. And I used to do commercial work for him years ago, and he kept telling me that he was going to come over and buy some pictures. Well, he did. In the meantime, he's bought over 150 pictures. He made a lot of money, is now retired and lives in Dallas, and invited us down last . . . well, in December to a party. About 120 people he was having in and wanted to show off the artist. So, it was a nice compliment. I suppose he owns more of my pictures than any other one person. Mr. Sherer has about 20 plus others I've done for him. Rose-Hulman has been very receptive to my paintings. They have a few. And there's a Lafayette Historical Society. I won a contest up there one year that has resulted in one of mine hanging in the courthouse permanently there.

They're scattered around different places. Vincennes has got quite a few originals. There's one of the old print shop, the first newspaper in Indiana. The original hangs in the Sun newspaper down there. I believe the name of it is the Sun.

JK: Vincennes Sun Commercial.

SEAMON: Sun Commercial, that's it. And there's several there in Vincennes. I did about eight altogether of some historical . . . there again, similar to the Forrest Sherer collection -- old historical buildings. A lot of history around Vincennes.

JK: Might we get on another tangent now? What is your philosophy regarding art? What do you want to achieve and what are your favorite works?

SEAMON: You mean favorite works of my own or other artists'?

JK: Your favorite works, of your own. And you might expand on the other too.

SEAMON: Well, on my own, once in a while a picture will come off fairly well, the way you hope for it to but not exactly. When you start out, about half way through you think well this is going to be the best one I've ever done; and between half-way through and the finish there's something happens to it that doesn't quite come off the way you wanted it to. Well, this is a good thing, because this is what keeps you going on to the next picture. You think, well, the next one's going to be good. Well, you go into each picture with a renewed enthusiasm that this is going to be the best one that you've ever done. Now, which one is the best, I really don't know. Some of them are favorites of mine because of the way that the medium turned out in certain areas. Others I like it for the subject matter, so I don't know. I don't think I could put my finger on one and say, "This is the best one I've ever done."

JK: Well, what about . . . what is your philosophy regarding art? Could you expand on that? I know I read this someplace.

SEAMON: Oh, I don't have much of a theory on art. If you like it, hang it up. You're going to live with it, but it's really more to it than that. I think each individual relates to certain things, understands certain things. These are the things he wants to live with. And in my case, it's rural Midwest. Another person may be interested in the more abstract and modern work. And I think there's room for all of it. I don't put any of it down because each artist is having a lot of fun doing his own particular work. Now, I've been asked the question many times, "How long does it take you to finish a picture?" And I usually say, well, this one took 35 years and so many minutes. But they all vary. Each picture has a different amount of subject matter on it and they would vary.

And another question, they want to know what I think of modern art. And this is not my answer, it's Waxfield Parrish's, and I believe it's the best answer I've heard for this question yet. And his answer was, "Time has nothing to do with it. It's either good or bad." And when you go back through history, all the good things have lived in music and art and so forth; the others have gone by the board. And I think this is probably the way it's intended to be.

JK: That's a good philosophy.

Now, let's get around to Terre Haute itself.
What are some of the important changes that you have seen here over the years?

SEAMON: Well, I can't really elaborate on that. There have been many, many changes in buildings and highways and everything else. I don't know what would be the most important. I think one thing is, the people seem to be more concerned now about their city and want to keep it cleaner and so forth. And I think this is good. They're concerned about the downtown, and I think there's going to be a lot of improvement down there. I think the people in this area are the greatest in the world, but I think the downtown is like all cities that are going through quite a struggle now. And I really don't know what the most important change has been.

JK: Well, what would you say then are some distinctive characteristics of Terre Haute and this community?

SEAMON: Well, of course, we have some fine shopping centers. They're a credit to any city. We have a Swope Gallery that's one of the finest in the Midwest, I'd say. And I'm not quite sure the local people look at it that way. I mean they should. Sometimes we're too close to something to really appreciate it, but it is a fine gallery. There's a lot of cultural . . . in the city. I don't know. The downtown improvement on 6th Street is a step forward, I think. And after all, the way we dress and the way we decorate our buildings or anything else is telling the world how we really feel about it. And I think the more we can dress up our own community, the better it'll be and the better feeling people will have about it.

JK: What would you . . . you speak about feeling.
What do you think about the attitude of people of this area, the citizens?

SEAMON: I think it's changing somewhat. For a long, long time it was hard to get anybody moving in the area to do certain things about certain things. But I believe this is changing, and I believe there is going to be a lot of pride in Terre Haute. It's an old city and a lot of heritage is here, a lot of old families. And I think they want to see it continue to be one of the important cities along the Wabash.

JK: You referred to a moment ago to the Depression when you worked at Thomson-Symon. Could you expand a little bit? What about the community at that time? Was it as hard struck by the Depression as other areas? Or could you just comment on that?

SEAMON: Well, the first impression downtown, half of the stores were empty, and it was this way all over the country. But it was pretty sad looking downtown. The old street lights were four or five clusters I think and half of the bulbs were gone. And debris and dirt was blown into the empty vestibules in front of the stores, and it was a pretty sad looking place. Well, that's all changed now. Half of the stores are gone. Well, I'm only kiddin' about that but it was . . . a lot of panhandlers in . . . I mean you couldn't walk down Wabash without being touched by several people for a handout and probably, justifiable.

JK: Well, what industries or businesses were flourishing or actually operating then where people did have employment?

SEAMON: I think Columbian Enamelling was working. Thomson-Symon was working. Some of the foundries . . .

JK: Was Quaker Maid going then?

SEAMON: Yes, I believe . . . yes. Uh huh.

JK: Campbell Soup?

SEAMON: Yeah. Louden's I believe was going then. They originated V-8, I think, started here. And one of the first canned dog foods started here -- Doggy Dinner. It was made by Louden's on South 3rd Street.

 There was a lot going. And then Merchants Distilling came in and . . . oh, I can't enumerate on all of them. I don't know, but there was . . . business was going on as usual but not booming.

JK: Well, I'm a native of South Bend, and I know that when Studebaker Corporation and the Oliver Plow Works were shut down during the Depression, the city was very hard hit because they had no other really . . . these were dominating industries. And you had smaller industries here and you referred to them. Are there any others that come to mind for that era?

SEAMON: Well, I don't know about the mines then, whether

SEAMON: they were working or not. It was just kind of a general letdown all over the country. Jobs were hard to get. Anybody that was working felt good about it. I know I was at that time making more than my dad. I was sending a little money home each week to help out, and it was rough all over. I don't know or I can't think right now of some of the other businesses really that were going, but it was rough. And to give an example, you could eat very well on a dollar a day.

JK: (laughs) Wish we could do that again!

SEAMON: Yeah. Things have changed. And really the old saying, "Nothing's so permanent as change," is true. But this inflation now, I can't keep up with it. By that I mean, I can't keep up with the idea of getting used to paying so much for a meal or a suit or something else. It just changes so fast it's hard to . . .

JK: Well, certainly you, with the inflation you have to increase the price of your works, too, do you not?

SEAMON: Yes. Supplies have gone up continuously like any other business. A piece of illustration board now is about \$8 or \$9 a sheet; you used to buy it for less than a dollar. But this is all relative. You mark your work up to try to keep up with the times, and that's about all I'm trying to do is to keep up with the times. What the real value of things are I don't know, but it's necessary to mark things up to keep up.

JK: Do you think Terre Haute is different than any other community?

SEAMON: Well, I don't know.

JK: . . . And how it might be?

SEAMON: I don't know if it's different. I know there's a lot of good people here, and I think that's one reason I've stayed here. It's about the right size town, at least for me. I like to go downtown and see people and have them speak to me and run into people I know. And I think they're a friendly bunch of people. I mean mostly, I'd say, good people.

JK: Is there anything you particularly liked or disliked about this community?

SEAMON: Well, one of the dislikes -- and probably it's a complaint with everybody -- is particularly living

SEAMON: on the north side of town. Every time I go to town I'm stranded by a freight train, but (chuckles) I tell everybody I've been here about 50 years and four of it I waited on freight trains.

JK: (laughs heartily)

SEAMON: . . . But this is not true. But that's the only complaint I have. When I first came to Terre Haute, Commercial Solvents -- you mentioned some of the . . . it was going good, and there were some odors from it that aggravated a lot of people. But after all, they were working so they put up with it. I don't know too many complaints other than . . .

JK: What are the things you like about it?

SEAMON: Well, I'd say . . . of course, anyplace . . .

JK: You mentioned the people.

SEAMON: Yeah, anyplace that you hang your hat and are fairly successful, I mean you can't help but like it I think. I don't know. It's just a good community.

JK: Salty, are there any particular assets you'd like to mention about the community?

SEAMON: Well, you mean as far as work or . . .

JK: Either.

SEAMON: Yes. The community is great. It has three colleges here -- St. Mary's of the Wood, ISU (Indiana State University), Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology -- and I think that speaks well for a community. And Alan Rankin, former president of ISU, retired here. John Logan, former president of Rose-Hulman, retired here. I think that speaks well of the community. They were both from out of the city and to want to spend the rest of their time here, I think that speaks well with the community. Terre Haute's fortunate to have three colleges of higher learning, I think.

JK: Now, we mentioned Swope Art Gallery several times. Isn't this quite unique for a city our size to have such a gallery?

SEAMON: Yes. I think it is, and I'm really proud of it, and I think the community should be proud of it. They

SEAMON: have quite a collection of art, some very important early works. And I just think that a community should be proud of it to have this type of gallery in a town this size. It's really a credit, and I think people really should take more advantage of it. There's a lot to see and do there.

JK: Now, your work . . . you've had a number of shows. Could you mention a few? Were you not associated with the Brown County art group?

SEAMON: I belong to the Brown County Art Gallery Association. There's two down there. Art Guild is another one. They were formed . . . well, let's see, I believe the Brown County Association was formed about 1926. I didn't get into it until about 1938 or '9, shortly before the war, and have been a member of that organization all these years and was president of it in 1971. It's quite an art center for what they call the Hoosier school of art, which is really painting the rural landscapes, and I've enjoyed my affiliation with it. And they get a lot of traffic from not only the United States but people from countries that stop and visit them.

JK: Now, what about the art shows that you have . . . one-man art shows or others that you've been in?

SEAMON: Well, I've had, of course, the show at Brown County. Each artist can show about five works three times a year -- in a spring, summer, and fall show. Then they have a one-man show in the solo room occasionally. I've been in that once or twice. I've had one-man shows at Gallipolis, Ohio, in the Riverby Art Gallery there. I have been over to Western Illinois University at Macomb, Illinois, about four times with one-man shows. I've been to the Krannert Art Gallery in Purdue a couple of times with a one-man show. I've showed at Lafayette.

JK: I think that gives us pretty good . . . you show quite a bit then. [There also have been one-man shows of Seamon's work at St. Mary's, Rose-Hulman, and Evansville.]

SEAMON: And, of course, around locally -- I mean Bloomington, Paris, Evansville. I've pretty well covered this area in one-man shows.

JK: Well, do you have any other comments you'd like

JK: to make about Terre Haute itself over the years as you've viewed it, as you've lived here and worked here -- its growth and development and perhaps how you view that and what you look for in the future?

SEAMON: Well, as I said earlier, I like the community. It's been good to me, and I enjoyed living here. I've many, many good friends and although I live north of the city, my business is all through Terre Haute. And I just think Terre Haute's going to go on and become one of the great cities along the Wabash. It's maybe been a little slow in the last few years. Like other cities, they've all had a kind of a growing . . . or not growing problem. But I think it's on its way, and we'll be a community that people will like to settle down in. A lot of people that come through the studio here, I ask them how they like Terre Haute, particularly newcomers. And they say well, the first impression we didn't like it, but we sure like it now. So, I think it boils down to the association with the good people really.

JK: Now, before we leave you talking today, probably there's been one person who has been greatly responsible for your success, your wife?

SEAMON: Yes. I'm a lucky guy. I've got a mate that really is a good agent and believes in me 100%, and I don't want to do anything to change her mind about that. (chuckles) But no, she's a good critic, too. She'll come in sometime, I'll be working on something, and she says, "Well, that looks crooked." And your first thought is, "Well, so what." But, really, after you think about it, she's seeing it the way other people are going to look at it, so I get busy and change it. And . . .

JK: How long have you been married?

SEAMON: We celebrated our 35th anniversary last December.

JK: Well, that's good, that's good.

SEAMON: We went together about eight years, so I suppose it's really more of an anniversary than 35 years. We really . . . I've really got a good wife. I mean she's a big help and anybody that's lucky enough to have a mate that's pulling for you all the time, I think you're a lucky person. Well, everybody calls her Polly; her real name is Marjorie. And about the only time I

SEAMON: ever heard anybody call her Marjorie was her dad. And where the name Polly came from, I don't know. Polly's usually a nickname for Pauline. But anyway, she goes by Polly.

I just want to do what I've been doing all these years 'til I fall over, and I feel good now. I'll be 70 in March, and I can't wait to get out here every morning to get started on the next project.

JK: Well, Salty, that's a great philosophy to have and your love of your work, and we love your work. And so, thank you very much for talking with us today.

SEAMON: Thank you. It was my pleasure.

END OF TAPE

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